



Department of Justice United States Attorney's Offices

Eastern – Northern – Southern – Western Districts of Texas

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U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN ASHCROFT AND "TEAM TEXAS" KICKOFF PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

(AUSTIN, TEXAS) United States Attorney General John Ashcroft, the four United States Attorneys in Texas—Matthew D. Orwig of the Eastern District, Jane J. Boyle of the Northern District, Michael Shelby of the Southern District and Johnny Sutton of the Western District—and Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott kicked off an awareness campaign to prevent and reduce gun violence, Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Modeled after the success of Texas Exile, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) promotes partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to target violent criminals who use guns and insures that when an armed criminal is arrested, that individual will face swift criminal prosecution and upon conviction stiff mandatory prison sentences. The Bush Administration will seek to commit \$533 million to this effort over two years, including \$233.6 million already available for this year. This funding will be used to hire new federal and state prosecutors, support investigators, provide training, and develop and promote community outreach efforts. The four United States Attorney's Offices in Texas received a combined total of \$3.9 million for FY 2003.

To promote the efforts of PSN in Texas, the four United States Attorney's Offices together with the Texas Attorney General's Office have united to form "Team Texas" which created a statewide PSN campaign called "Drop the Gun." The campaign will include public service announcements, posters and other materials designed to increase the public's awareness of the concerted effort by federal, state and local authorities to stem gun violence throughout Texas.

Please see attachment for examples of PSN removing violent criminals from Texas communities.

For more information, please visit the PSN website at: www.psn.gov. To report gun crime, please call 1-800-ATF-GUNS or your local police department or sheriff's office.



**U.S. Department of Justice
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Western District of Texas
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May 2, 2003

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PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS CAMPAIGN - WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

(AUSTIN, TEXAS) United States Attorney Johnny Sutton this afternoon joined Attorney General John Ashcroft and the other three U.S. Attorneys in Texas to announce the implementation in Texas of a nationwide Department of Justice initiative designed to reduce gun violence, Project Safe Neighborhoods. "Criminals who use a firearm to commit acts of violence will find no safe haven in Texas. The four top federal law enforcement officers in Texas are committed to ensuring that these violent criminals are removed from our law abiding society and provided new living quarters— federal prison," stated U. S. Attorney Sutton.

Sutton noted that the Western District of Texas has already hit the ground running concerning Project Safe Neighborhoods:

- In **AUSTIN**, James Henry Diaz was sentenced on March 30, 2003, to five years in federal prison without parole for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. While intoxicated, Diaz discharged a .45 caliber pistol during a domestic dispute with his girlfriend. Prior to this case, Diaz served three years in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for shooting a 16-year-old boy with a shotgun during a dispute over money owed for illegal drugs. Also, Lawrence Lee Demps was sentenced on March 28, 2003, to 100 months in federal prison without parole for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm—a .50 caliber semi-automatic pistol—and possession with intent to distribute approximately 29 grams of "crack" cocaine. Demps' criminal history includes convictions for possession of illegal drugs, assault with injury, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and failure to identify. Anthony Tyrone Perkins faces up to 10 years in federal prison without parole after being convicted by a jury on April 8, 2003, for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Following a vehicle and foot pursuit by officers with the Austin Police Department, Perkins was arrested for aggravated robbery and found to be in possession of a loaded .25 caliber pistol. Because of the more severe penalty Perkins faced under the federal sentencing guidelines, the Travis County District Attorney's Office opted to dismiss their prosecution in lieu of a federal prosecution. Perkins' criminal history revealed convictions for assault on a police officer and possession and delivery of cocaine.
- In **SAN ANTONIO**, Charles Frederick Peoples was sentenced to 77 months in federal prison on April 24, 2003, for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. On January 23, 2001, San Antonio police responded to a report of an accidental shooting. Peoples was attempting to put a .357 revolver in his waistband when the firearm discharged. Peoples later informed the officers that his original intent was to commit suicide. However, when Peoples couldn't carry out the suicide attempt alone, his plan changed to pointing the gun at a police officer and forcing the officer to kill him. Peoples' criminal history reflects two prior robbery convictions in Bexar County, Texas. Also, on March 6, 2003, Robert Earl Grant was sentenced under mandatory sentencing guidelines to just under 13 years in federal prison without parole for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. Grant, a 3-time convicted felon for Aggravated Robbery with a Deadly Weapon, was arrested on August 2, 2001, by a San Antonio Police detective who recognized the defendant as a parole violator. At the time of the arrest, Grant was in possession of a .25 caliber pistol. Arthur Rodriguez was sentenced in December to 24 years in federal prison without parole for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm and possessing an unregistered firearm. On January 10, 2001, San Antonio Police detectives stopped the defendant's vehicle and observed in plain view a 12-gauge sawed-off shotgun in the back seat. The detectives also recovered narcotics and a 400,000-volt stun gun from the defendant's vehicle. Rodriguez's criminal history revealed three prior violent felony convictions: Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon; Attempt to Commit Murder; and, Burglary of a Building, all in Bexar County, Texas.
- In **WACO**, Maurice James was arrested and charged by criminal complaint on April 9, 2003, with being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. Upon conviction, James faces up to ten years in federal prison. Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives executed a search warrant at James' residence where they discovered two 9mm pistols, one of which was reportedly stolen two years ago in Decatur, IL. James' criminal history reflects prior convictions for Unlawful use of Weapons, Burglary and Forgery in Illinois.

The Western District of Texas encompasses 68 counties spanning approximately 93,000 square miles and includes an estimated population of 5 million. The headquarters office is in San Antonio and branch offices are located in Austin, El Paso, Waco, Del Rio, Midland, Alpine and Pecos.